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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/072,506	02/05/2002	Masatoshi Imai	59227/SONYP	2876

24201 7590 10/19/2007  
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EXAMINER
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NGUYEN, CAM LINH T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2161

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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10/19/2007

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/072,506

Applicant(s)

IMAI, MASATOSHI

Examiner

CamLinh Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 August 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 4-18 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

1. This Office Action is response to amendment filed on 8/15/2007.
2. Applicant's amendments to the Office Action are acknowledged. Consequently, rejections to claims 1 – 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103(a) are withdrawn.
3. Claims 1 – 18 are currently pending.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

5. Claims 1 – 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim 1 is rejected as non-statutory for not having a tangible result. The phrase "and output the compared and selected pieces of data" in the preamble does not necessarily require the method processed in a computer; claim 1 as being directed towards a series of mental steps. All the steps of the claimed method can be carried out within the human mind. Mental steps are not patent eligible subject matter for the reason that the mental steps are insufficient to produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result, and pass the practical application test set forth in State Street. To be patent-eligible, abstract steps must produce either a physical transformation or a useful, concrete and tangible result.

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In this case, claim 1 includes a method for ... "output the compared and selected pieces of data".

But in the body of claim, there is no step for "output the compared and selected pieces of data".

Therefore, claim 1 is an abstract idea. Functional descriptive matter Computer program without computer readable media and computer can be considered abstract.

For suggestion how to overcome this rejection, applicant need to produce a tangible result based on these devices such as registering or storing the registered word in a computer device, and must specify what action will take place for the determining step if it's inhibited to register the unknown word.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

6. Claims 4 – 18 are allowed.

7. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: in independent claims 4 and 11, an apparatus comprising the teaching of "the number of said parallel basic cells in said first stage of said basic block is larger by one than the number of said parallel basic cells in said second stage of said basic block, and the total number of said basic cells is equal to the number of combinations of pieces of input data to be compared", taken with the other limitations of the claim, were not disclosed by, would not have been obvious over, nor otherwise fairly disclosed by the prior art of record.

8. The dependent claims, being further limiting, definite and fully enabled by the Specification, are also allowed

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

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fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

### ***Response to Arguments***

9. Applicant's arguments filed 8/15/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that the amendments to claims 1 – 18 are now made those claims statutory. The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Claim 1 includes a method for ... "output the compared and selected pieces of data". But in the body of claim, there is no step for "output the compared and selected pieces of data". Therefore, claim 1 is an abstract idea. Functional descriptive matter Computer program without computer readable media and computer can be considered abstract. Therefore, claims 1 – 4 are still fall within a statutory category of invention.

### ***Conclusion***

10. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

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will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CamLinh Nguyen whose telephone number is 571 – 272 - 4024. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

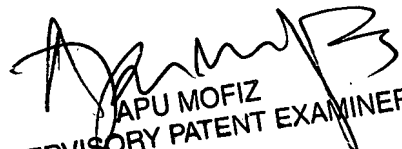
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Apu Mofiz can be reached on 571 – 272 - 4146. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571 – 273 - 8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Nguyen, Cam-Linh

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LN

  
APU MOFIZ  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER